

after heavy weather, and examined a young Arctic Skua that had recently been shot at Hendaye.

173. *PROCELLARIA PELAGICA*, Linn.

174. *CYMOCHOREA LEUCORRHOEA*, Vieill.

The Storm-Petrel was observed during the winter gales. I saw a Fork-tailed Petrel which had recently been obtained at St. Jean-de-Luz ; and Philippe records two found dead on the 29th October, after heavy weather, far inland at Campan and Pierrefitte.

175. *PUFFINUS KUHLI* (Boie).

It is the Mediterranean Shearwater, and not *P. major* of the North Atlantic, which has been obtained on the coast between St. Jean-de-Luz and Bayonne.

176. *ALCA TORDA*, Linn.

177. *URIA TROILE* (Linn.).

Both the Razorbill and Guillemot were common in the bay in January.

178. *COLYMBUS SEPTENTRIONALIS*, Linn.

The Red-throated Diver was identified in the bay, and I believe I saw some individuals of the larger species.

This is a poor list compared with that of M. Lacroix, which contains nearly 350 species ; but if his example were followed, and the birds of the coast of the Mediterranean as far as Marseilles, with all the Warblers and Waders of the Camargue, were included, it would be easy to add another fifty "on my personal knowledge." But the latter would scarcely be Birds of the Pyrenees, and I have already strained a point in regard to the species found on the west coast.

XL.—Notes on the Eighth Volume of the ‘Catalogue of Birds in the British Museum.’ By H. B. TRISTRAM, D.D., F.R.S.

No work more complete and comprehensive in its design than the British Museum Catalogue has ever appeared on

ornithology. It would be unreasonable to expect that the volumes of a series so wide-reaching and extensive, and necessarily the work of various authors, should be exactly equal in exhaustiveness or accuracy, still less that in the present state of our knowledge, all should be in accord as to the delimitation of the various groups, whether of families or genera. On this point the writers of the *later* volumes on the *Passeriformes* are undoubtedly at a disadvantage. Their predecessors could pick and choose, and eliminate from their scheme every anomalous form, relegating it, if not too late, to the Timelines or elsewhere. The writer of an early volume might lay down his diagnosis of family, subfamily, or genus, and gracefully return into Dr. Günther's hands every proffered species which does not shape its first primary, its culmen, or the scales of its tarsi according to the statute in that case made and provided. But a day of retribution comes. The waste-paper basket must be cleared. The unfortunate exiles, who have been passed, like vagrants under the old poor-law, from parish to parish, must find a home somewhere; and the task of finding it falls to the compiler of some later volumes, where *Tatare*, *Xenicus*, *Clytorhynchus*, *Acanthisitta*, *Ruticilla moussieri*, and many another friendless stranger must have a somewhat general refuge afforded to them. Nor can we expect the various authors to have identical views on the specific value of many forms. Yet we may reasonably presume that the system of subdivision shall be guided by the same general principles. A careful examination of vol. viii. compels us to the conclusion that Dr. Gadow, in compiling his portion of the Catalogue, has too often disregarded any idea of conforming to a general principle. He has, to take the case of the Paridæ, exercised his right of private judgment to a very liberal extent. But our complaint is, that he has not done this on any uniform or consistent principle. We are bewildered by the inclusion or exclusion of subspecies or races, but no information is given as to why one form has specific rank, another subspecific, and a third is classed as a race. We ask in vain why *Parus leucopterus* is a race of *P. niger*,

while *P. persicus* is a subspecies of *P. cæruleus*. To an ordinary observer the differences of the former are more marked than those of the latter. Again, *P. haplonotus* is made a subspecies of *P. xanthogenys*, which is sometimes carelessly spoken of as *P. jerdoni*; while *P. beavani*, which, from the diagnosis given, as well as in actual fact, is more decidedly differentiated from *P. rufonuchalis* than is *P. haplonotus* from its conspecific form, is put down as a race, whereas *P. castaneiventris* is unhesitatingly put down as a species. Sometimes colour is ignored, sometimes size, as constituting specific value; but it is all haphazard. To take the instance of the American *P. atricapillus*:—under this form *P. occidentalis* is ignored. We are told it is a somewhat differently coloured race, but are not informed what are the differences of colour. *P. septentrionalis* is also ignored, though we are told the differences, both in size and colour; while to *P. carolinensis* is granted subspecific rank. Writing with specimens of all these races before us, we are sorry to say we cannot discover the justification for this varied mode of treatment. Certainly the claims of *P. septentrionalis* seem as great as those of *P. carolinensis*. But it is needless to multiply instances. The objection is not to the use of the terms “race” and “subspecies,” but only to their capricious application.

In the formation of a key to the species, valuable as such a key is as an index to the holder of an unnamed specimen, it is also important that, if possible, it should be so arranged that the various species, when classified in accordance with it, shall show some sort of natural order, and that closely allied species shall not be widely separated by the intrusion of a totally different group between them. In this respect the admirable synopsis of Baron de Selys-Longchamps seems to commend itself at once by its simplicity and truthfulness. That accomplished naturalist has happily seized on the salient characters and arranged them in such a manner that every bird, with its subspecies and races, seems to fall into its place in natural order. We venture to reproduce it in translation (Bull. Soc. Zool. France, 1884, p. 76).

PARUS.	{	Body dark. No sharp pattern in the plumage. No crest	{	Underside light-coloured. Pattern sharply defined.	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{	{
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While adopting this classification and key, we must not be supposed to endorse all the Baron's views with respect to races, though happily he has too much respect for Linnaeus to inundate us with subspecies; but we are hardly yet prepared to depose our old friend *P. teneriffæ* or our new acquaintance *P. flavipectus* from their specific position. Yet we are convinced that a more careful and complete review of the Parinæ has never yet appeared. But, in opposition to the views advocated by Baron de Selys-Longchamps, Dr. Gadow, and Mr. Seebohm alike, M. Menzbier has enunciated a totally new theory (*Revue Scientifique*, Paris, 1884, p. 515), holding:—not that the subspecies of Mr. Seebohm are races derived from a common type and modified by surrounding conditions, and that the intermediate examples of two found near the geographical limits of each are hybrids, but that, on the contrary, many of these are good aboriginal species, e. g. *P. flavipectus* and *P. pleskii*, and that *P. cyanus* and *P. cæruleus* are Tits of the Anglo-Saxon type, busied in the absorption of the local species, and destined ultimately to exterminate all traces of their rivals. The theory is original; but we think that naturalists will hardly yet be prepared to accept it, nor do we perceive its basis of facts, so far as yet set forth.

Passing from the Paridæ to the Laniidæ, it is in the latter that we find the errors of this volume most apparent. It is not, however, Dr. Gadow's fault, but that of his predecessors, that he has been compelled to dislocate *Gymnorhina* from *Strepera*. But we cannot pass over without a protest the inclusion of *Clytorhynchus* under *Xenopirostris*. To say nothing of the one being a well-marked Madagascar genus, and the other a native of New Caledonia, we find that though the wing-formula is similar, yet in other points they differ widely. The bill of the New Caledonian is not nearly so elevated or convex as in *Xenopirostris*; while the rictal bristles, feeble and scarcely to be detected in the latter, are very strong and powerful in the former. I say nothing of the brilliant plumage of all the Madagascar birds and of the sombre uniform drab of the New Caledonian. Dr. Gadow

seems to have had before him only a solitary example of the genus from Madagascar; but he had a pair of the New Caledonian species. His description is unintelligible, unless "outer," in line 6, be a slip of the pen for "inner;" and speaking from a careful examination of eight specimens now before me, I can say that it would be scarcely possible for the whitish terminal tip on the outer central pair of tail-feathers to wear off until the tail was worn to a stump. There is no authority for Dr. Gadow's statement that this bird is a native of the New Hebrides. The fact is that it is a typical *Myiolestes*, a peculiar Pacific-Ocean family, from which there is no pretext for dissociating it; it is intermediate between *M. vitiensis* and *M. maxima*, while *M. nigrogularis* from Fiji makes a far nearer approach to *Xenopirostris*.

But it is to the classification of the *Pachycephalinae* that we take most exception. We have certainly not to complain here of races and subspecies, but of wholesale "lumping" without any reason assigned, in defiance both of literature and of specimens, even when the latter are in the British Museum. There is no class of birds in which the variations in colour are more interesting or important—not only every Pacific group, but in many cases each island of a group having its own localized form. Be they species or not, they are recognizable, and the catalogue which does not notice these modifications with a reference to their bearing on geographical distribution is valueless.

Under the first species given, *Pachycephala melanura*, we find included *P. macrorhyncha* and *P. clio*. We should hesitate to reject Salvadori's very clear diagnosis of *P. macrorhyncha* because sometimes a few black feathers may occur on the side of the neck. There may certainly be a tendency to inosculate in all these closely allied forms. The Sula and Bouru form, *P. clio* of Wallace, is rejected because "the colour of the upper tail-coverts is of no specific importance." But Wallace gives other distinctive characters, size and broader pectoral band, which hold good in our specimens; besides which we find the black of the tail more intense, and the rectrices edged with deep yellow instead of

silver grey. We presume that the writer must have examined these birds by gas- or candle-light.

We observe throughout the volume that every species described by Mr. E. P. Ramsay is invariably accepted without hesitation or question, and consequently the one subspecies admitted in this genus is *P. kandavensis*, the description being copied, but no specimen examined; for the three specimens in the British Museum from Kandavu, Dr. Gadow very rightly relegates to *P. vitiensis*. It seems impossible, from the description, to distinguish the two. But unfortunately Mr. Layard's observations have been quite overlooked; they point out that *P. vitiensis* is the special form of Kandavu, and it is scarcely probable that a second very closely allied, if not indistinguishable, race should occur in the same very small island. Next, in describing *P. gutturalis*, the author says, "I have copied Ramsay's description of *P. occidentalis*, although the specimens from Western Australia in the Museum do not agree with his diagnosis"! We can only add, neither do our own three from Western Australia. Yet the next species is *P. occidentalis*, without a specimen to justify it. On *P. littayei*, adult female, is the remark, "Canon Tristram says 'the female is little less brilliant in colour than her mate.'" Then the writer proceeds to state, as if in contradiction to this statement, the differences, which are taken word for word from the description by Tristram. This seems scarcely a fair way of treating a describer. But *P. astrolabi* is perhaps one of the least excusable of all the mistakes of the volume. Having assumed that *P. christophori* is identical with *P. astrolabi*, Dr. Gadow proceeds, "The diagnosis given by Tristram for his *P. christophori* (♂) agrees with an immature male of *P. astrolabi*." But just above he has described the young male, stating it is one of the types of *P. christophori*. We have seldom met with a more amusing instance of begging the question. The very measurements given might have created some suspicion; they are 7·7, 0·9, 4·2, 3, and 1, as against 6, 0·75, 3·4, 2·5, 1. More correctly the last three measurements should have been 3·1, 2·4, and 0·9. Not only is there this material

difference in size, but the adult male of *P. christophori* has an olive-green, not a black head, has no vestige of a yellow collar behind, has tail olive-green instead of black, and has the black collar in front double the depth of that of *P. astrolabi*. In fact there are no two birds of the yellow-throated group more widely separated: one is the largest and the other the smallest of the group. Of both we possess adult and young of both sexes. With the next species, *P. torquata*, is united *P. intermedia*, Layard. The references are given to Mr. Layard's very careful observations on the spot, from the P. Z. S. and 'Ibis,' but his remarks are totally ignored. He has pointed out that *P. torquata* is confined to Taviuni, while on Viti Levu is found *P. intermedia*. If Dr. Gadow has ever seen the two together it is difficult to conceive how he could have confounded them. The one has a black gorget, the other a faint black line; the one has the throat and all the lower plumage rich orange, the other has the underside yellow; the back of the one is very dark olive, the other very pale olive-green. *P. torquata* has no loreal yellow spot, *P. intermedia* has. The description of the female of *P. torquata* is scarcely recognizable from the type, while the female of *P. intermedia* is totally different, being brown and mottled grey instead of chocolate. But it is unfortunately evident that while Mr. Layard's papers have been referred to, they have not been read.

A similar ignoring of authorities meets us in the next species of the Catalogue, *P. graeffei*, to which is united the distinct species *P. neglecta*. Not a word of explanation is given, and yet the descriptions and notes of Layard are referred to as though they had been examined. *P. graeffei* is confined to Vanua Levu, *P. neglecta* to Ovalau. The underside of the former is deep orange, with yellow loreal spots, of the latter rich brilliant yellow, with no loreal spots. Even if these differences be not specific, subspecific, or racial, they ought at least to have been mentioned for the guidance of students. *P. jacquinoti* is next described merely as "very similar to *P. astrolabi*, Bp., but differing from that species in having the whole throat and fore neck deep shining black." There is

no description given of the female, which is strikingly distinct from that of any other of the group.

We do not understand why *P. xanthetræa* is changed into *xantherythræa*, unless it be that the writer was not aware of the derivation, which is from *ἡτρον*, the belly, and has no connection with *ἐρυθρός*, as he seems to have supposed. It is also curious to have *P. grisola* described from an Andaman-Island specimen, and three Burmese specimens quoted, while the habitat is given as Java, Sumatra, N.W. Borneo.

On the genus *Lanius* there is much less room for criticism. We think we detect Mr. Seebohm's guiding hand, and we cannot complain of "lumping" here, excepting in one or two cases. The writer who could separate *L. fallax* and *L. elegans* ought to have been able to recognize *L. excubitoroides* from *L. ludovicianus*. The division into species seems carried to its utmost limits, when, *e. g.*, we find *L. mollis* granted full specific rank on the strength of tail-coverts "sandy buff" instead of "creamy greyish white"!! and the microscopic distinction between *L. homeyeri* and *L. leucopterus* admitted. It is also admitted that in Turkestan the two species (?) interbreed. But it is when we reach the six species *L. fallax*, *assimilis*, *hemileucurus*, *grimmii*, *dealbatus*, and *elegans* that the genius of splitting has reached its fullest development. On *L. elegans* we may observe that the only specimens, excepting the type, presented to the British Museum by the Hudson-Bay Company were all procured by ourselves. The type may be dismissed by common consent, since, not being *L. ludovicianus*, there must be some error in assigning it to the fur-countries. Our specimens, though attributed to Algeria and Tunis in the Catalogue, do not come from Cisatlantic Algeria or Tunis, but from the oases of the M'zab country in the Sahara. They were all shot by myself, except one by Mr. J. H. Gurney, Jun., during his visit to the M'zab in 1870. But in the same oases I shot, together with the previous specimens, several birds which are now decided to be *L. hemileucurus*. All my specimens of the latter are *female*, of the former *male*, and no other Shrike has been met with in the district. It is important to remember that no grey Shrike, except *L. algeriensis*, occurs

north of the Atlas, so that the expressions Tunis, Algeria, may mislead. However, it is admitted that "every intermediate stage in coloration occurs between *L. hemileucurus* and *L. fallax*;" which being admitted, and the geographical range being identical, the species we think may not unreasonably be called in question. *L. assimilis*, which seems to me only an eastern race of *L. hemileucurus*, is stated to have a most extraordinary habitat, viz., "Sennaar and the White Nile, ranging through Turkestan to the Amoor." The only authority for Sennaar and the White Nile is a solitary purchased *immature* skin in the British Museum without further history than "East Africa." We fear this is very slender evidence for so exceptional a career.

Again, on *L. fallax*, which has borne in turn no less than six aliases, from all of which it is now excluded, we find some remarks which may somewhat shake our confidence in the soundness of these diagnoses. *L. fallax* is stated to be a paler race of *L. algeriensis*, but differing in some minute particulars. But, on the other hand, we have a species, *L. uncinatus*, from Socotra, the distinguishing feature of which is its strong and hooked bill. We find that a Palestine bird has the bill just as much developed as the Socotran. From this is drawn the inference that the Palestine birds are intermediate between *L. fallax* and *L. uncinatus*. I do not for a moment question the fact, but I doubt if there be any ground for separation, specific, subspecific, or racial. I find my specimens from the same locality, obtained at the same time, are placed some in one category, some in another. Verily these definitions would have gladdened the heart of the elder Brehm! I observe that my male specimens are placed in one series and my female in another. The only conclusion we can arrive at here is that the species-making is a little overdone in the Laniinæ, to atone perhaps for the very different treatment meted out to the Pachycephalinæ.

When we come to the Ethiopian forms, we find *Lanius collaris* and *L. humeralis* treated as merely races, on the ground that in the debatable land of Natal the South-African and the

Abyssinian forms, in two or three specimens, appear to run into each other; *L. smithii*, a very marked form of *Lanius*, follows as a subspecies, while *L. fuscatus*, so closely allied to *L. schach*, enjoys full specific dignity. A like inconsistency is shown in the case of *L. cristatus* and *L. superciliosus*, the latter being simply a more brightly coloured form, with no specific distinction. As to its distribution, we are told that it winters in Java, Malacca, and the Philippines, and in spring migrates northwards through China, breeding in Japan, Mantchooria, and Mongolia south of Lake Baikal. I cannot discover the authority for these statements, which are directly contrary to the very exhaustive account of this Shrike by Lord Tweeddale (*Ibis*, 1867, pp. 218–220). The only specimens in the British Museum are from Malacca. A startling phenomenon in geographical distribution is presented in the case of *L. speculigerus*, which is stated to be found in Dauria, Turkestan, Afghanistan, and Abyssinia (!). The authority for this last locality seems to be a specimen from King M'tesa's country, which is not exactly Abyssinia, according to our ideas. But the explanation is, that the writer has confused the North-Asiatic bird with Hartlaub's *L. gubernator*, from Equatorial Africa, now before us, a perfectly distinct species, which is altogether ignored. The description of *L. speculigerus* is quoted from Finsch; but we have not been able to discover where he has described it. While on the subject of nomenclature, we may express surprise that Dr. Gadow has selected *tigrinus* as the name for *L. magnirostris*, having apparently overlooked the unanswerable article of Lord Tweeddale (*Ibis*, 1867, pp. 221 *et seq.*).

Turning to the Nuthatches, we may remark that *Sitta syriaca* is stated to occur in Palestine, while *S. neumayeri* is assigned to the north, the Balkans, Asia Minor, and North Persia. It is this latter alone which has been found in Palestine; but I have repeatedly shot both forms on the same rocks, and once by the same shot, in the Taurid. The difference between the two so-called species is merely size. After finding them recognized as distinct species, it is sur-

prising to see *S. aculeata* merged under *S. carolinensis*; for the differences, if slight, are constant. But yet stranger is it to read that *S. villosa*, from China, is a subspecies, "scarcely specifically distinct from the widely ranging North-American *S. canadensis*." On the contrary, there are few Nuthatches more markedly distinct. The tail-feathers of the American bird are black, with a white subterminal bar and brown extremities. The Chinese has black rectrices with whity-brown extremities. The throat is ashen instead of white, there is no white nuchal collar, nor any black patch on the side of the neck; the black cap does not extend more than half as far; the back is a more ashen hue, and the whole underside russet-brown instead of rich fawn-colour.

Occasional misprints cannot be avoided by the most careful compiler; but there are, unfortunately, exceptionally numerous errors in this volume which cannot be attributed to the printer. Some of these are mere oversights, as when we are told four times over that the tarsus of *Parus lugubris* is over 2·7 in. But in the references to authorities they continually occur, to the great inconvenience of the student. Thus, p. 80, we find P. Z. S. 1863, pp. 336, 451, instead of 1863, p. 336, and 1870, p. 451; on p. 190 we find Ibis, 1879, p. 147, when it ought to be Ibis, 1877, p. 357. But it is needless to waste time on errata, as we trust a sheet of them will soon be published. Our complaint against the volume is that it gives no sign, except in such cases as the Grey Shrikes, of the care and labour which has been bestowed on the previous volumes. We do not wish to be captious or unreasonable critics; but ornithologists have a right to expect that the papers of the describers of species (especially when they have been field-naturalists working on the spot, and giving the life-habit of the bird, like Mr. E. L. Layard) should at least be looked at, and their specimens examined, instead of being passed over *sub silentio*. Ornithologists have also a right to expect that the compilers of the catalogues, while each is quite free to adopt his own views of classification and arrangements, should yet be, in some slight degree, consistent in their method, and—may we add?—that some one at least should verify the references.